

Ah, me, to falter before a girl,  
Whose shy lids never would let  
you know.  
Save for the lashes wilful curl,  
The pansy-purple asleep below!  
—KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD.

# G A L A T E A

An Innocent Black Cat that Served  
as the Emissary of Cupid

By KATE M. CLEARY

STEVA never could remember to walk when she was in a hurry. If any idea of decorum did slumber in the recesses of her mind, it had been dispelled by the nature of her discovery and the necessity for conveying that discovery into the house undetected. So she raced around the corner of the street, and along the fashionable boulevard, to the surprised amusement of the occupant of a carriage that was moving in the same direction. The great stone residence, up the steps of which the girl flew, was lighted as though for some festal event.

"Goodness!" she gasped, striving to retain hold of her struggling burden, while she plunged her fingers into the shopping-bag pendent from her belt, in search for an evasive latch-key. "I'd forgotten there was a dinner on this evening! I wish I'd gone around to the side door. But now that I'm here—"

In accordance with the contrariety of things inanimate at a critical moment, the key slipped from her grasp and dropped with a tinkle on the step. At the same instant the man in cape overcoat and high hat, who had alighted from the carriage, stooped to recover the elusive little object. He swept off his hat, and smiled. "May I assist you?" he asked. But as his glance fell upon the animal she carried, an exclamation of astonishment broke from him. "Where," he asked, in the utmost amazement, "where did you get Galatea?"

"Galatea!" she echoed, and her young voice was as keen with amazement as his own. "Oh, what a name for such a cat!"

And entirely forgetful of the danger of being heard within the house, heedless also of the fact that she never before had seen the distinguished-looking young man who addressed her, she burst out laughing, the veritable laughter of a child, gay, wild and sweet.

"You think Pluto would be more appropriate." Her mirth was contagious, and he was laughing too. "She is pretty black, I admit, to wear the fair name of Pygmalion's statue-love. I think that was why my uncle christened her Galatea—by way of a comical contrast between the cat and her cognomen."

Steva Berriste, supple and erect as eighteen is apt to be, looked up at him inquiringly. His carriage had been driven away. They were in the vestibule. Without was the fading daylight. From behind the doors of frosted glass light came streaming through shades of amber silk. "Does your uncle own this cat?" she questioned.

"Yes. He is almost frantic over its loss." He bent forward and ran his finger around the animal's neck. "It is just as he supposed. It was stolen for the sake of the gold chain it had on its neck. That must have been filed off. Where did you find her?"

"I was down at the college settlement. I went to see one of the girls in my embroidery class. It is a neighborhood where the people are extremely poor, and not—not all honest," she admitted. "I noticed the cat following me when I was half-way home. So I picked her up. I was going to keep her. But of course now that I know who owns her I shall take her back. Where does your uncle live?"

He mentioned the name of a famous hotel.

"Very well. I shall telephone him when I go up-stairs and tell him I'll take Galatea to him in the morning. But you've forgotten to tell me your uncle's name."

"It is the same as mine. I am called after him."

Steva resented the teasing tone. She drew herself up with a pretty pride that pleased him immensely. For the first time he realized that she was not a school-girl, as her short walking-skirt, extremely youthful countenance and propensity for cats had led him to suppose.

"I have not the honor of knowing yours," she returned with hauteur, "nor do I care to, except in so far as the restoration of the cat is concerned."



Steva Never Could Remember to Walk  
When She Was in a Hurry

"I beg your pardon!" he entreated humbly. "My name is Chauncey Dever. Shall I not meet you at dinner this evening?"

Chauncey Dever! Oh, what would her aunt say? The wealthy, the erudite, the desirable Chauncey Dever, for whose captivation Eleanor and her mother harbored such plans, such ambitions! And here she, the poor little cousin, who always kept out of range of their fashionable acquaintances, was monopolizing the guest of the evening, and talking with him about cats in the vestibule!

"Give me the key—quick!" she begged in a soft, excited voice. "Well, open the door—there! But wait a moment before you ring. No, I sha'n't be at the dinner. I—I don't belong here!" Then as the door opened, she slipped in.

He saw her crimson-cloth costume go flashing like a streak of fire up the broad central stairway. "By

Jove!" he ejaculated. "What a perfectly stunning girl!"

Then he rang, was duly admitted, formally announced, and found himself bowing to his hostess and her magnificent daughter.

"I so deeply regret," he declared, "that I must apologize for my friend. Captain Stannard received a telegram late this afternoon which required his immediate return to his post. He desired me to convey his regrets to you and to Miss Eleanor."

But while perfunctorily murmuring the polite speeches, his abstracted gaze was wandering around the room. She had said she did not belong here. Faith, she didn't in a way! The honored guest told himself, with scant deference to the charms of the other young women present. There was not one half so graceful or so pretty—not one! Then, as despair at not seeing her again loomed blackly before him, he was seized by an illuminating inspiration.

"My dear Mrs. Hunt!" he exclaimed. "how very unfortunate! We are thirteen. I never should dare to be one of thirteen to sit down to dinner. Is there no one on whom we may call to fill the vacancy?" Then he paused, breathless.

There was a low-spoken dialogue between the

hostess and Eleanor. Regarding them, an assertion of George Eliot's flashed across Dever's mental consciousness: "The mother often stands behind her daughter a dark prophecy—To this also will you come!" It was undeniably probable that into such an overblown, overdressed, overemphatic individual would the sumptuous daughter be transformed by hereditary evolution.

Dever shuddered slightly at the thought.

"I suppose we must have Steva down," Mrs. Hunt was saying reluctantly.

"I suppose so," Eleanor assented sullenly, and frowned.

A message was sent up-stairs. Laughing over superstitions in general, and this one in particular, the company waited. Chauncey Dever drew a quick breath of delight when the girl of the cat, as he mentally called her, came running lightly down the stairway. She paused just inside the drawing-room door with a little comprehensive courtesy that included all the dinner guests. Then she went straight to her aunt.

"I hope I may avert ill-fortune, Aunt Harriet," she said laughingly.

Ignorant of the knack some women possess of dressing rapidly and well, Dever was astonished at the change in her attire—a change which seemed to include herself. She had twisted her luxuriant fair hair high on her shapely head, and thrust a silver dagger-pin through its coils. Her best gown into which she had slipped was of black *crêpe de chine*, cut away at elbows and at the white bosom. She appeared tall and stately in the soft, clinging, dusky draperies, with the cluster of rose carnations at the corsage. No one now would take her for a school-girl. Dever dubbed himself a blockhead for having done so, when, on his name being mentioned to her, she swept him the airiest bow, with a look of coolest acknowledgment, untinged by recognition.

Later in the evening, being bidden as a poor relation might be, she played and sang—entrancingly.

Dever made the excuse of turning her music. "Tell me," he begged, "why you brought Galatea home with you?"

She flashed a saucy look up at him. "For good luck of course! If a black cat follows you, and you wish to be fortunate, you must bring her home with you."

"But—when you return her? Will you not then surrender all your good luck?"

"I shall try to remember that felicity has been mine for one evening." The little curl of her lip was bewitching. "I have been permitted to dine with the cream of my aunt's acquaintances, and not," with some scorn—"not below the salt!" Then she laughed outright while her hands flew over the keys in a fantastic waltz measure. "I also have the greater privilege of entertaining them," she added.

"Miss Berriste," he implored, "do not send Galatea back to-morrow! I'll—I'll explain to my uncle. He would be so unwilling to—to take away your good luck!" As she smilingly refused to accede to his request, he became more eager in his entreaty. "There are reasons I—I cannot explain now. As a favor—please keep her for the present at least—"



She Flashed a  
Saucy Look  
up at Him

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